

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3475
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
CINCPAC HONOLULU
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PORT MORESBY 1082

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, ID, PP, SREF
SUBJECT: DEVELOPMENTS ALONG INDONESIAN-PNG BORDER

1. FOREIGN SECRETARY SIAGURU, AT MY REQUEST, REVIEWED EVENTS ALONG THE INDONESIAN-PNG BORDER WITH ME ON JULY 13. HIS COMMENTS ARE SUMMARIZED IN FOLLOWING PARAS.
2. GPNG RECEIVED REPORTS IN MARCH THAT IRIANESE DISSIDENTS HAD ESTABLISHED CAMPS ON PNG SIDE OF BORDER. GPNG CALLED IN JACOB PRAI AND SETH RUMKOREM AND TOLD THEM THEY MUST NOT USE PNG TERRITORY FOR THEIR CAMPS. GPNG THEN INCREASED PATROLLING AND FOUND ABANDONED IRIANESE DISSIDENT CAMP, A WELL ESTABLISHED CAMP WITH BARRACKS, TRAINING AREAS, ETC. PNG TROOPS BURNED IT.
3. THE IDNAPPING OF INDONESIAN OFFICIALS BY IRIANESE

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DISSIDENTS IN MAY SHARPLY INCREASED TENSIONS. SIAGURU SAID IRIANESE DISSIDENTS TRIED TO KIDNAP NINE, BUT TWO WERE KILLED IN SCUFFLE, AND HENCE THEY TOOK ONLY SEVEN. AFTER EARLY ATTEMPTS TO RECAPTURE HOSTAGES FAILED, GOI ISSUED ULTIMATUM WARNING DISSIDENTS OF HARSH PENALTIES IF KIDNAPPED MEN WERE NOT RELEASED. GOI ACTIVITY WAS THEN STEPPED UP SIGNIFICANTLY. INDO AMB BUSIRI NOTIFIED GPNG

THAT THIS WOULD HAPPEN.

4. INCURSIONS: INDONESIA TROOPS MADE THREE INCURSIONS INTO PNG TERRITORY IN JUNE IN THEIR SEARCH FOR THE KIDNAPPED MEN. THE FIRST WAS MADE IN EARLY JUNE BY TWO INDO HELICOPTERS WHICH LANDED IN VILLAGE FIVE MILES EAST OF BORDER WITHIN PNG IN LATE AFTERNOON AND STAYED OVERNIGHT. NEXT INCURSION WAS BY ABOUT 100 INDO PARATROOPERS WHO LANDED A FEW KILOMETERS WITHIN PNG ABOUT A WEEK LATER. NEXT INCURSION WAS ABOUT ONE WEEK AFTER SECOND WHEN 150 INDO PARATROOPERS LANDED AGAIN A FEW KILOMETERS WITHIN PNG TERRITORY. IN EACH CASE GPNG LODGED STRONG PROTEST WITH INDO AMB BUSIRI. IN EACH CASE THEY WERE TOLD INCURSIONS HAD TAKEN PLACE THROUGH ERROR AS INDO PILOTS HAD BELIEVED THEY WERE OVER INDO TERRITORY. SIAGURU SAID THOSE FAMILIAR WITH AREA, ESPECIALLY THOSE IN LOW-FLYING HELICOPTERS, COULD EASILY TELL WHICH SIDE OF BORDER THEY WERE ON. HE THOUGHT THE CLAIMS OF PILOT ERROR WERE NONSENSE. (COMMENT: WE HAVE HEARD FROM OTHER SOURCES THAT PNG DEFENCE FORCE INTERCEPTED RADIO COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN PILOTS AND THEIR BASE IN WHICH PILOTS REPORTED TO BASE THAT THEY WERE FLYING OVER PNG TERRITORY.)

5. AFTER FIRST INCURSION GPNG ANNOUNCED DEPLOYMENT OF PNG DEFENCE FORCE RECONNAISSANCE PATROLS WHICH WERE SUBSEQUENTLY STEPPED UP SIGNIFICANTLY. (COMMENT: THESE CONFIDENTIAL

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WERE SEEMINGLY IN COOPERATION WITH GOI ATTEMPTS TO PREVENT DISSIDENTS FROM BRINGING KIDNAPPED MEN INTO PNG.)

6. BOMBINGS: SIAGURU SAID ON JULY 3 INDONESIA PLANES (BRONCOS) DROPPED EIGHT BOMBS OF 25 KG EACH ON VILLAGES ABOUT FIVE KILOMETERS FROM BORDER ON INDONESIA TERRITORY. HE SAID AREAS BOMBED HAD EARLIER BEEN SURROUNDED BY INDO TROOPS, WHO APPARENTLY INTENDED TO CAPTURE PEOPLE AS THEY FLED FROM VILLAGES. SIAGURU SAID BOMBINGS AND INCURSIONS WERE APPARENTLY UNSUCCESSFUL AS KIDNAPPED MEN HAVE NOT BEEN RELEASED NOR HAVE DISSIDENTS SURRENDERED.

7. REFUGEES: INCURSIONS FOLLOWED BY BOMBINGS HAVE LED TO SHARP STEP-UP IN IRIANESE REFUGEES CROSSING INTO PNG. SIAGURU SAID REFUGEES ARE SIMPLE VILLAGE PEOPLE, NON-POLITICAL, WHO ARE AFRAID OF MORE INCURSIONS AND BOMBINGS. SIAGURU SAID THERE ARE 400 IRIANESE REFUGEES IN ONE CAMP, AND AROUND 100 IN ANOTHER. HE HOPES UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES WILL BECOME INVOLVED AS HE SEES NEED FOR TRANSFER OF REFUGEES TO THIRD COUNTRIES. HE SAID THAT GROUP OF IRIANESE REFUGEES CROSSING INTO WESTERN PROVINCE ELEVEN MONTHS AGO HAD GONE HOME ONLY SHORT TIME

AGO, AND GPNG HAS HAD TO FEED THEM IN MEANTIME.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PORT MORESBY 1082

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8. FUTURE: SIAGURU SAID TOP LEADERSHIP OF GPNG IS SERIOUSLY WORRIED ABOUT SITUATION. SAID THERE ARE STRONG SYMPATHIES FOR IRIANESE, AND POINTED OUT THAT MANY PEOPLE IN PNG PUBLIC LIFE HAVE RELATIVES IN IRIAN JAYA. AT SAME TIME THERE IS CLEAR RECOGNITION OF INDONESIA'S MILITARY STRENGTH. HE SAID THIS COULD BECOME VERY EMOTIONAL POLITICAL ISSUE IN PNG, AND PUBLIC OPINION COULD FORCE GPNG INTO POSITION WHICH WOULD ANTAGONIZE GOI. SIAGURU EXPECTS SHARP DEATE IN PARLIAMENT DURING AUGUST SITTING, AND ADDED THAT PRIME MINISTER WILL SEEK TO DEFUSE SITUATION BY MAKING DETAILED STATEMENT ON SECOND DAY OF SITTING. (COMMENT: STATEMENT MAY SERVE TO HEIGHTEN INTERNATIONAL INTEREST, EVEN IF IT COOLS DOMESTIC PRESSURES, WHICH IS DOUBTFUL.)

9. GPNG SOUGHT ASSURANCES FROM AMB BUSIRI THAT GOI WOULD LIMIT MILITARY ACTIVITY TO FIVE MILES FROM BORDER. AMB
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BUSIRI RESPONDED AFTER REFERRING MATTER TO JAKARTA THAT INDO FOREIGN AFFAIRS DEPT WOULD REQUEST DEFENSE DEPT TO INSTRUCT MILITARY COMMANDER IN JAYAPURA TO DO SO. SIAGURU REGARDS THIS AS NO REASSURANCE WHATSOEVER. SIAGURU EXPECTS GOI TO CONTINUE CURRENT TACTICS IN TRYING TO STAMP OUT IRIANESE DISSIDENTS. HE BELIEVES THESE REPRESSIVE TACTICS WILL LEAD TO MOUNTING OPPOSITION ON PART OF IRIANESE PEOPLE TO INDONESIAN RULE. HE THINKS SITUATION WILL REACH POINT WHERE GPNG WILL HAVE TO MAKE A VERY DIFFICULT DECISION, AND AT THAT TIME HE THINKS GPNG WILL COME DOWN ON SIDE OF IRIANESE DISSIDENTS. EVENTUALLY HE THINKS GPNG WILL HAVE TO RAISE QUESTION IN INTERNATIONAL FORA, SUCH AS UN. HE IS FULLY AWARE OF KIND OF REACTION THIS WOULD PRODUCE IN JAKARTA.

10. COMMENT: IT SEEMS TO ME THAT TIME HAS COME FOR USG TO CONSIDER ITS ROLE AS SUPPLIER OF ECONOMIC AND MILITARY AID TO INDONESIA. HOPE DEPARTMENT WILL CONSIDER DISCUSSING THESE PROBLEMS WITH GOI, POINTING OUT DIFFICULTIES FOR ALL CONCERNED IF GOI CONTINUES ON ITS PRESENT COURSE. USE OF US ORIGIN AIRCRAFT TO BOMB VILLAGES CAN ONLY HAVE UNFORTUNATE REPERCUSSIONS IN UN AND IN WORLD PRESS.
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